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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION PRESIDENT BUSH TO IRAQ; ISLAMIC ACTIVITIES
IN LATIN AMERICA 06/14/06; BUENOS AIRES

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Today's most important international stories include US President Bush's trip to Baghdad; and the US House of Representatives passing a resolution calling on the Latin American countries to 'intensify their efforts' against Islamic groups.

2. OPINION PIECES AND KEY STORIES

- "Bush's surprising visit to Baghdad"

Daily-of-record "La Nacion" reports (06/14) "US President George W. Bush surprisingly traveled to Baghdad to personally support the new Iraqi government and seek more support for the US intervention in Iraq, which has been highly questioned in his own country.

"Al Zargawi's death seems to have increased confidence levels in the president, who will have to face crucial legislative elections by mid-September."

- "We'd better go"

Marcelo Cantelmi, international editor of leading "Clarín," writes (06/14) "Washington is unlikely to believe that violence in Iraq is the only outcome of Al Qaeda's work. This suggests that the death of Al Zargawi was a turning point. Now, the Iraqi Shiite government may take over. However if killings continue, it will be their burden.

"As a matter of fact, Al Zargawi's death can act as a platform from which the US will seek to get rid of an uncomfortable 'swamp'... Bush's statement on violence was at least honest when he admitted the probable future of Iraq."

- "Too many purposes for only one trip"

Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nacion," comments (06/14) "Why did George W. Bush travel to Iraq? Why didn't he do it ten days ago or next month? Because the US president knows he has no time to spare in his own country - the death of Al Zargawi gave him the opportunity he was seeking to gain some relief and convey multiple messages to both the US citizens and the Iraqis.

"The paradox is that Bush traveled to the Middle East to support the incipient Iraqi government but, above all, to recover the support of the US citizens, who are disappointed about the way the 'war on terror' is being developed.

"... US President Bush's trip to Iraq is significant, in regards to building public confidence that the situation in Iraq is moving away from civil war, and the last-minute idea by the presidential team to

strengthen (President) Bush's deteriorated image."

- "Threat in Latin America"

Daily-of-record "La Nacion" reports (06/14) "The US House of Representatives passed a resolution considering Islamists' activities in Latin America 'a potential threat' and calling the countries of the region to 'intensify their efforts' against those groups.

"US Representatives approved the text unanimously after recalling the criminal assaults against the Israeli Embassy and the AMIA headquarters in Buenos Aires in 1992 and 1994, which 'clearly demonstrated that international terrorist organizations, such as Hezbollah, are ready and able to carry out attacks against the Western Hemisphere.'"

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GUTIERREZ